

MANUAL
—OF THE—
First Congregational Church



LONDON, - ONTARIO.

LONDON FREE PRESS PRINTING CO.
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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

London, Ontario,

DUNDAS STREET, near COLBORNE.

Pastor—REV. H. D. HUNTER, Residence 510 Dufferin Ave.

SERVICES :

SABBATH—11 a. m. and 7 p. m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL—2.45 p. m.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING—Tuesday Even'g, 8 o'clock.

SOCIAL WORSHIP—Thursday Evening, 8 o'clock.

CHOIR REHEARSAL—Friday Evening, 8 o'clock.

BUSINESS MEETING—Last Thursday Evening in Each Month.

LORD'S SUPPER and BAPTISM—First Sabbath in Each Month, at Close of Morning Sermon.

OFFICERS :

PASTOR :

REV. H. D. HUNTER, 510 Dufferin Avenue.

DEACONS :

HENRY MATHEWSON, 452 Queen's Avenue.

GEORGE JAMES,

HENRY TOZELAND, St. James' Park.

THEOPHILUS ALLEN, 450 Central Avenue.

G. T. RENNIE, Governor's Road.

ARTHUR T. H. JOHNSON, 410 Bond Street.

TRUSTEES :

HENRY MATHEWSON, 452 Queen's Avenue.

GIDEON DECKER, Lambeth.

WILLIAM D. RIDDELL, 474 Maitland Street.

THEOPHILUS ALLEN, 450 Central Avenue.

GEORGE RENDELL, 574 York Street.

All other Officers are chosen annually, and names and addresses will be published in the Annual Reports.

CONGREGATIONALISM.

Statement of General Principles

—SHOWING—

WHAT IT IS, WHENCE IT IS, AND WHEREIN IT DIFFERS
FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS BODIES.

WHAT CONGREGATIONALISM IS.

A Christian Church is a local society of believers, united by covenant in obedience to the will of Christ for the edification of its members, the observance of Christian ordinances, and the propagation of the Christian faith.

Every such association implies a ground-work of organization, with regulating principles and governing laws; and the working out of these principles in the shaping and controlling of the life of the organization constitutes its government: hence every Church must have some form of government.

All Church government reduces itself to three pure forms: (1) That which lodges its power in the hands of one supreme sovereign or pontiff; (2) That which vests its authority in the hands of a privileged order, composed of a greater or smaller number of principal persons; and

(3) That which vests its supreme power (under God) in the hands of ALL WHO ARE INCLUDED IN THE ASSOCIATION.

The first of these is the Monarchic, or Episcopal ; the second, the Aristocratic, or Presbyterial ; and the third, the Democratic, or Congregational form of Government.

Congregationalism, as a form of Church order, derives its name from the prominence which it gives to the congregation of Christian believers. It vests all ecclesiastical power, under Christ, the only supreme head of the Church, in the associated brotherhood of each local Church as an independent body. Yet, between these independent Churches it recognizes a fraternal and equal fellowship, which invests each with the right and duty of advice, counsel, and, if the course pursued by another of the sisterhood should, for the preservation of its own purity and consistency, demand it, even the public withdrawal of that fellowship.

Herein Congregationalism proper is distinguished from that ultra type of independence which ignores any check, even of advice, upon its actions, and which is repugnant alike to the higher instincts of devout hearts and the best interests of the cause of God. Hence, though every Congregational Church is really independent, it does not follow that every independent Church is a Congregational one.

The fundamental principle of Congregationalism is, that the Bible, interpreted by sanctified common sense, with all wise helps from history, from the various departments of knowledge, and especially from the Revealing Spirit, is the one and only authoritative guide in all matters pertaining to Christian faith and practice. And that whatever the Bible teaches by direct precept, living exemplar, or legitimate inference, is imperative and binding upon all

men at all times ; and, per *contra*, that nothing which is not so inculcated is necessarily imperative upon any man at any time.

Flowing from this fundamental truth are many subordinate principles, of which the following are chief:—

1. Any company of persons believing and publicly professing themselves to be Christians, and who, by voluntary compact in obedience to the command of Christ, associate themselves together for the purposes of Christian work and worship, is a true scriptural Church of Jesus Christ.

2. As a rule, such a Church should include only those who can conveniently worship and work together, and mutually watch over each other in love.

3. Every member of Christ's Church has equal essential rights, privileges and power with every other, and the collective membership have the right and duty of choosing all their own officers, admitting, disciplining and dismissing their own members, and transacting all other business pertaining to the interests of a Christian Church.

4. Every such Church, while acknowledging its obligation meekly and gratefully to receive, and candidly and prayerfully to weigh advice, counsel, and, if needs be, admonition from sister churches, is yet independent of any and all outward jurisdiction and control whether of Popes, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, or any other person or persons assuming to be Christ's officials ; from General Conventions, Conferences, or Assemblies ; from Councils, Associations, Presbyteries, Synods, or any other ecclesiastical body or bodies, being answerable directly and only to Christ, its only and supreme head. Hence, whatever may be its lowliness, either as it regards numbers or worldly estate, it is on a level of inherent genuineness,

dignity and authority with every other Church of Christ on earth. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

5. Although every such Church is equal with all others in essential rights and powers, and by its very constitution independent of all exterior control, yet a most cordial fraternal fellowship should ever be maintained amongst them—each affectionately caring for the other's soundness in doctrine, purity in communion and general welfare. Hence, when difficulties arise, or especially important matters claim attention and decision, as in the settlement or dismissal of pastors, the formulation of articles of general belief, or contemplated changes in its organic life, it is not only competent but highly desirable that such Churches should, in a fraternal and friendly manner, advise and help each other in all proper ways. But such advice should be tendered only as one friend counsels another, and subject in all cases to the final decision of the party seeking it. If any such Church should seem to its sister Churches wilfully and wrongfully to disregard their advice by adopting erroneous beliefs, or choosing an unsound pastor, or making itself guilty in any flagrant way of unchristian things, sister Churches would be in conscience bound to withdraw themselves from all complicity with and responsibility for such action by the formal revocation of fellowship with the offending Church until it should return to what seems to them the path of duty. Such action, however, can in no wise aspire to the place of authority over the Church to which it refers. It will be simply a labor of moral suasion and self-justification.

OFFICERS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.

The officers which Christ has designated for His Church are of two kinds :—

(1) PASTORS.—In the New Testament called indiscriminately Overseers, Elders, Presbyters and Bishops. It is their work to preach the Word and exercise general oversight over all the spiritual concerns of the Church. The pastoral office and relation is permanent.

(2) DEACONS.—Whose work it is to attend to the relief of the poor ; to administer the secular affairs of the Church when the administration of such affairs is not otherwise specially provided for ; in the absence of the Pastor to preside at Church meetings, and to aid the Pastor generally in his work as they may have ability and he may desire.

The Board of Deacons in this Church shall consist of six members, who shall be chosen by the membership from their own number, and their term of office shall be three years. Beginning with the Annual Meeting in 1881, two shall retire each year, but the retiring Deacons shall be eligible for re-election.

THE ORDINANCES.

BAPTISM.

Who are proper subjects for Baptism ?

Infants and adult believers.

What is the Scriptural mode of Baptism ?

Sprinkling, pouring or immersion.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

This Church spreads no sectarian or denominational table ; it spreads Christ's. It cordially invites and welcomes all who accept Jesus Christ as Saviour to a participation in this most blessed service.

“ He filled the cup with wine, and said,
Drink, drink ye all of this ;
For thus My life-blood shall be shed
To ransom souls for bliss.”

PUBLIC RECEPTION OF MEMBERS.

Jesus saith, Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ; take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls ; for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

And the Spirit and the Bride say come ; and let him that heareth say come ; and let him that is athirst come ; and whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.

DEARLY BELOVED,—You are here in the presence of God and these witnesses to profess in this public manner your faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. We trust that you appreciate the solemnity and blessedness of this confession, and that He who has begun His work of grace in your heart will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

This Church, into the confidence and fellowship of which you are now to be welcomed, holds in common with its sister Churches in Europe and America, that human formulations of dogma, whether in the form of written creeds or articles of religion, are neither conducive to the unity of faith nor preventive of error, and that the Holy Scriptures alone are the true standard of religious belief and rule of Christian practice.

As a Church we decline to accept the theology of any man, or class of men, as necessarily authoritative ; nevertheless, on all material points we are in substantial accord with the doctrines held by the fathers of Congregationalism in England and America holding such views, not because they held them, but because we find them in the Word of God.

Whilst we claim, we also most heartily concede the free exercise of private judgment on all matters that come within the legitimate range of human reason , hence, beyond the doctrines hereinafter stated, each member must be held responsible for his own distinctive opinions without in any way compromising those of his brethren.

We believe in God the Father—the Being of absolute perfection—the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the Universe, who so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son for its redemption;

And in Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, who became man and suffered and died to make atonement for the sins of the whole world—who rose from the dead and ascended on high, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, punishing the wicked with everlasting destruction from His presence, and receiving His people into His everlasting kingdom ;

And in the Holy Spirit—the Comforter—who is Divine, by whom the soul is born again and sanctified, by whose inspiration the Scriptures are given, and who with the Father and the Son, together one God, is supremely to be loved and alone to be adored ;

That there is one true Church of God, holy, Catholic, which comprehends all men, in all climes and ages, who truly believe in Jesus Christ, its only and Supreme Head ;

That each local Church should be composed exclusively of those who have been made "new creatures in Christ Jesus"—that it is complete in itself—independent of all ecclesiastical authority—that it should receive its own members, maintain its own discipline, and appoint all its own officers, in harmony only with the principles of the New Testament ;

That Baptism should be administered to infants, and to adults not previously baptized on the profession of their faith ; to infants by the application of water to them ; to adults in any way they may wish ;

We believe in one Communion of the body and blood of Christ, and cordially invite and welcome all Christians to join us in its celebration ; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the Life immortal. Amen.

These, brethren, are the distinctive principles of Congregational Churches in general, and this Church in particular, and in taking your place amongst us we trust they will be found by you more and more to be in harmony with both the spirit and letter of the New Testament.

And now, in the presence of God, and these Christian friends, you do cordially enter with us into the everlasting covenant of grace ; confessing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, to be your Preserver, Saviour, Sanctifier and present Guide ; and covenanting that you will henceforth faithfully endeavor to keep His commandments, to walk with His disciples in love, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live while in the world soberly, righteously and temperately, ever looking for that "blessed hope" of the Church, "the glorious appearing" of the Great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**(BAPTISM SHOULD HERE BE ADMINISTERED TO ANY WHO
HAVE NOT BEEN BAPTIZED.)**

(THE CHURCH RISE.)

As members of this Church, we welcome you in the name of our Master, to His discipleship, to a participation in the duties, privileges, and honors of His Church, and the fellowship of that multitude which no man can number, who have confessed Him on earth and who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth ;

And in token of our confidence and sympathy, and as a pledge of the cordiality with which we bid you welcome, I extend to each of you the right hand of Christian fellowship.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Believing the Sunday School to be a part of its necessary work, this Church stands pledged always and by all proper means to foster and sustain it.

The officers shall be :—

- (1) President (the Pastor shall be President).
- (2) Superintendent.
- (3) Secretary-Treasurer.
- (4) Librarian.
- (5) Assistant Librarian.
- (6) Organist.

The officers and teachers shall constitute the Teachers' Meeting.

Officers may be elected by the Teachers' Meeting, but the election must be confirmed by the vote of the Church.

STANDING RULES.

1. The Pastor of this Church shall be a member of it, and shall be its standing Moderator and, *ex-officio*, a member of all its Committees.
2. In the absence of the Pastor, or in any case when he may be a party in interest to Church action so as to make it improper for him to act as Moderator, a Moderator *pro tempore* shall be chosen by nomination, unless otherwise agreed.
3. The financial year of this Church shall be concurrent with the calendar year, and the Annual Meeting shall be held in the month of January on such date as the Pastor and Deacons may appoint.
4. The Ordinances shall be observed on the first Sabbath in each month; and the business meetings held the preceding Thursday evening. All members of sixteen years of age and over shall be entitled to vote.
5. Special business meetings may be held, but such shall always be announced from the pulpit on the Sabbath preceding, by and with the consent of the Pastor and Deacons.
6. All business meetings shall be opened with prayer.
7. At the Annual Meeting of the Church the following elections shall be made for the ensuing year—all the officers to serve during good behaviour and until others shall be chosen to take their places.
 - (1) A Secretary, who shall keep the records.
 - (2) A Treasurer, who shall be a member of the Board of Finance (see Finances, p. 18), who shall take charge of all Church moneys, and contributions for charitable,

of the charges against him, and such other particulars as they shall deem meet.

(e) If on such hearing the Church are satisfied of the guilt of the accused, they may vote to admonish him, to suspend him for a definite period, or to expel him from membership, according to the nature of the offence and the state of the offender's mind in relation thereto.

17 The introduction of any matter of business beyond that which is common to all business meetings of the Church, shall in all cases require at least one month's previous notice in writing.

18. The Auditorium of this Church shall in no case be opened for lectures, concerts or other public meetings, apart from those held under the auspices of the Church, except by special resolution of the Board of Trustees.

19. Inasmuch as the Press is the proper advertising medium of the country, no notices shall be read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day, save such as relate to the services and work of this Church—except by special consent of the Pastor and Deacons.

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS.

20. A joint meeting of the Church and Congregation shall be held as early in the month of January in each year as possible, always preceding the Annual Meeting of the Church, to hear reports from the various officers. At this meeting it shall be competent for any member of the Con-

gregation to make any suggestions he may wish touching the general interests of the Church.

The Order of Business for this joint meeting shall be


- (1) Opening services.
- (2) Reading minutes of previous meeting.
- (3) Reports of officers : (a) Pastor ; (b) Deacons ; (c) Treasurers ; (d) Ladies' Aid ; (e) Trustees ; (f) Sunday School ; (g) Pew Allocation Committee ; (h) Auditors ; (i) Choir.
- (4) New business.
- (5) Closing exercises.

21. Immediately at close of the foregoing joint meeting the Annual Meeting of the Church shall—unless otherwise arranged—be held, at which the following shall be the Order of Business :

- (1) Opening exercises.
- (2) Reading records of last Annual Meeting.
- (3) Reports of officers and action thereon.
- (4) Choice of officers : (a) Two Deacons ; (b) Treasurer ; (c) Assistant Treasurer ; (d) Pew Allocation Committee ; (e) Board of Finance ; (f) Ushers ; (g) Secretary ; (h) Sunday School officers.
- (5) Deferred business.
- (6) New business.
- (7) Adjournment.

22. No alteration shall be made in these Rules, or in any Article of this Manual, except at a regular meeting of the Church, and after at least one month's notice in writing, and then only by vote of three-fourths of the members present.

SOURCES OF INCOME.

1. Pews and sittings are allocated to any persons desiring to worship with us on application to any member of the Allocation Committee, or any of the Ushers.
 2. A specified sum per week is expected from all seat holders, which with the usual collection it is hoped will afford sufficient revenue to cover and promptly pay all expenses incurred.
 3. Special contributions shall be taken each year in aid of the Missionary Society, the Congregational College, Widow and Orphan's Fund, and such other denominational objects as may need help.
 4. Envelopes corresponding to each week in the year will be furnished to all contributors by the Ushers, and an account opened between them and the Assistant Treasurer, when it is expected that the amount promised will be regularly and punctually paid each week.
 5. Pews and Sittings which are three months in arrears shall be considered vacant, and the Allocation Committee will be at liberty to allot them to other persons, provided always due notice shall have been given to the party so delinquent.
-  Punctuality in these matters will render unpleasantness impossible.

FINANCES.

The general finances of this Church shall be administered by a Board, to be called "The Board of Finance," which shall consist of not less than five nor more than nine members, of whom two shall always be Deacons, and who shall be elected at each Annual Meeting of the Church and serve during pleasure.

The Board may elect its own Chairman and Secretary, but the Treasurers, who shall be the Treasurers-elect of the Church, shall be elected by the Church.

The Board shall present a full statement of the financial condition of the Church at the last Church meeting in each quarter. The first of such statements to date from the next Annual Meeting.